**Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities – Parliamentary Inquiry – Response of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups**

1. **About the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups**

Formed in 2005 the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups is currently made up 21 groups predominantly across England Scotland and Wales. We are the only Gypsy and Traveller membership-based infrastructure organisation in the UK.Membership is open to any new or existing GRT group within the UK where at least 60% of the management committee is of GRT origin – groups where less than 60% of the management committee is of GRT origin can join as “Associated Members”. Key areas of our work include capacity building and development of member organisations to increase their resilience and sustainability and local/national policy-focussed work (including planning, accommodation, health, education and criminal justice)

1. **Summary**

* NFGLG welcomes the decision of the Women and Equalities Select Committee to undertake this inquiry and the opportunity to contribute to it.
* The UK still lacks an over-arching Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy. This remains a major omission and a key barrier to addressing the communities’ needs.
* Since the 28 commitments were produced there has been only limited progress in achieving progress in tackling the inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (and Roma) across a range of service areas. The situation is detailed in our report “Experts by Experience”.
* The 28 Commitments lacked funding, timetabling and prioritisation. There was no Action Plan for their implementation and there has been little in the way of leadership or monitoring from the Government with regard to their progress.
* Accurate data with regard to the GTR communities remains patchy. Systematically-collected data is still lacking in (for example) the NHS and across much of the CJS. Where data is collected there is often no differentiation made between the different communities and inconsistency in the classifications used. Where surveys have been carried out these have often involved small sample sizes, making it unwise to draw firm inferences.
* Mechanisms for engagement and dialogue have been of limited effectiveness. At a national level the NFGLG/DCLG GTR Liaison Group has seen some significant “wins” Often, however, there can be a lengthy “time lag” between the identification of an issue and its resolution. At a more local level real progress has been achieved via working with policy-makers and service providers.We believe that the way forward lies in expanding on local level work whilst combining this with work at a national level.
* Inequalities against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are evident across health, housing, criminal justice, education and employment. It is clear to see why anti-Gypsy prejudice remains “the last acceptable form of racism”.
* The change in definition of “Gypsy/Traveller” will have a key impact especially on Gypsy and Traveller women
* With regard to LGBT people within the GRT communities we are aware that they can be affected by a double whammy of racism and anti-LGBT prejudice. Consequently the pressures on mental health resulting from insecure accommodation and the attendant stress can be combined with the additional "stressor" of having to hide your sexuality.

1. **Inquiry Questions**
   1. *What progress has been made in achieving the commitments of the Ministerial Working Group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers?*

See Annex 1

* 1. *Have these commitments delivered a tangible improvement in the position of Gypsy and Traveller communities?*

No, if anything (especially with regard to the change of the definition of Gypsy/Traveller for planning purpose and the dropping of the requirement for local authorities to carry out Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments) the situation has worsened rather than improved. For example, a number of GTAAs carried out since the change of the definition have recorded a zero figure in terms of need, whereas under the previous definition needs had been identifiede.g. Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation(OPDC)and Newham - February 2016.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The European Commission[[2]](#footnote-3)commentedin 2014 on the prevalence of discrimination in the UK and states that “hostile attitude and negative stereotyping of Gypsies and Travellers and newly arrived Roma should be carefully addressed. Effective measures should be taken to combat anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech”

* 1. *How well has this work been led, managed and monitored across Government?  Has sufficient funding been provided, and has adequate funding been identified for the future?*

Apart from the quarterly liaison group meetings leadership, management and monitoring has been conspicuous only by its absence. There has been no Government funding. Indeed, although NFGLG co-organise the quarterly liaison group meetings, the only funding available is for travel costs of two people per attending organisation.

* 1. *What mechanisms have been put in place to achieve the Ministerial Working Group’s commitments and other policy aims for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities?*

The only one of which we are aware is the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Liaison Group co-organised by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups.

* 1. *Is adequate data available to underpin policy-making? Where the most significant gaps in the evidence base and what are the reasons for those gaps?*

There is demonstrably a lack of adequate data available to underpin policy making. Although the 2011 Census contained, for the first time, an ethnicity classification of Gypsy or Irish Traveller, it is, believed that this produced a *significant* undercount as many Gypsies and Travellers would not identify their ethnicity due fear of racism and discrimination. Further, no formal data has been collected regarding the numbers of Roma (in the more limited “East European” sense). Equally importantly, in many other official data sets, Gypsies, Travellers and Roma communities are absent from ethnic monitoring data. For example, it has not yet been adopted as a standard ethnicity category by the NHS (despite repeated assertions that this is going to happen), whilst a study of police services produced in 2016[[3]](#footnote-4)found that “the vast majority of police forces in the UK (81%, 39/48) do not include Gypsies and Travellers in their ethnic monitoring systems”.

Data for school pupils does include Roma, but it combines Roma with Romany Gypsies in one category whilst having a separate category for Irish Travellers.

With regard to the NHS we have been informed that the delay is due to difficulties in amending the computerised system to include an additional ethnicity category (i.e. Gypsy/Irish Traveller as per the 2011 Census). It is now approaching 6 years since the last Census was carried out. We can only conclude that the NHS database must be inordinately difficult to amend

* 1. *How effectively has policy taken into account the diverse needs of different Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and a developing context including greater use of social media?*

There is a real need for consistency here and a recognition that the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are distinct ethnic groups, As noted above the 2011 Census treated Gypsies and Irish Travellers as one group whilst excluding Roma altogether – any Roma completing the Census form would have beensubsumed under the categories of European/White ‘other’ and denoted by country of origin in any official data sets. Similarly education data treats Roma and Romany Gypsies as one group (despite their wildly different experiences) whilst Irish travellers are treated as a separate group.

With regard to social media although increasing use is made within the community of Facebook and (to a lesser extent) Twitter we are not aware of any initiatives on the part of the Government to communicate with and/or involve the GRT communities via social media.

* 1. *How effective are mechanisms for engagement and dialogue between national and local policy-makers and members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities?*

Existing mechanisms have been of limited effectiveness. On a positive note, nationally the NFGLG/DCLG GTR Liaison Group has seen some significant “wins” in terms of bringing forward the review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act and the re-inclusion of Gypsy/Traveller site funding in the Affordable Housing Programme. Often, however, there can be a significant “time lag” between the identification of an issue and its resolution (if, indeed, it is resolved at all).

At a more local level we have seen real progress via working with policy-makers and service providers e.g. Birmingham City Council’s Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller (GRT) Task Group and the Worcestershire GRT Partnership. We believe that the way forward lies in expanding on local level work whilst combining this with work at a national level.

* 1. *In what areas of public life are inequalities against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities evident? How do these affect access to services, outcomes and life chances for people in those communities? How well are these reflected in policy priorities?*

There is insufficient space to answer this question here, although we would point out that inequalities against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are evident across health, housing, criminal justice, education and employment. It is clear to see why anti-Gypsy prejudice has been described as “the last acceptable form of racism”. For a full answer we would recommend that you go to the report “Gypsy, Traveller and Roma: Experts by Experience”<http://www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org/uploads/3/7/5/2/37524461/e141126_experts_by_experience_report.pdf>

In terms of their reflection in policy priorities the needs of GRT communities appear to be given little priority. Priority is only given when the communities are seen as being a “problem” that needs to be addressed e.g. the change of definition of Gypsy/Traveller in the revise Planning Policy for Travellers Sites

* 1. *Are there particular challenges faced by groups within GRT communities, for example women and LGB&T people?*

For Gypsy and Traveller women the issue of "gypsy status" is of key importance and gives rise to challenges under articles 8 and 14. The whole background to gypsy status is problematic as it is linked to “moving for an economic purpose". Women have the added worry of not having a safe legal base from which to access services for children. Traditionally marriage takes place earlier in the Gypsy and Traveller communities and traditional role models are followed. Some young women are now attending university but higher education is still nottaken up compared to wider society.

With regard to LGBT people within the GRT communities we are aware (from talking to LGBT community members) that they can be affected by a double whammy of racism and anti-LGBT prejudice (both within the community and from outside. Consequently the pressures on mental health resulting from insecure accommodation (lack of sites, policies with regard to Unauthorised Encampments etc) and the attendant stress can be combined with the additional "stressor" of having to hide your sexuality. However the communities are quite private in relation to relationship issues,do not discuss homosexuality and so little is said on this particular issue as a whole.

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| **Annex 1 - Ministerial Working Group on Gypsies and Travellers commitments progress at 30 October 2014 and NFGLG’s views on this January 2017**  **n.b. please view this section using “Web Layout”** | | |  |
| **Commitment** | **Progress so far** | **Publication** | **NFGLG Comments** |
| **Dept for Education** |  |  |  |
| **1.** *Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are specifically highlighted as a vulnerable group in the revised Ofsted framework.* | An explicit reference to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils now appears in the Evaluation Schedule, which guides inspectors in judging the quality of education provided by schools. | Published in time for April 2012 report.  The current version of Ofsted’s school inspection handbook (Sept 2014) can be accessed here:  <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-handbook> | We are concerned about the training of Ofsted inspectors. What steps are taken to ensure that they understand the issues relating to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children? |
| **2.** *We will pilot a Virtual Head Teacher for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in a small number of local authorities. Funding will be allocated to each authority for the appointment of a senior dedicated individual to champion the interests of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils across the authority and to monitor and respond to issues of low attainment and attendance.* | Two local authorities (Kent and Cambridgeshire) appointed Virtual Head Teachers with a strategic role in the council, focussing on monitoring attainment and fostering school-to-school collaboration. Both authorities ran a number of school level projects designed to improve outcomes of pupils. | The authorities published the outcome of their work in October 2014. This has been shared with the Department’s Education Stakeholder Group, and a link has been sent to all local authorities in England.  Links to the work are below:  <https://www.learntogether.org.uk/services/creds/Pages/Welcome.aspx>  <http://www.edukent.co.uk/our_services/service/inclusion_support_service_kent/page_2/> | The pilot was completed in only two local authorities and the funding did not even provide for a full-time post in each. The outcomes were limited. Academies are outside the remit of the local authority. This will be increasingly an issue. |
| ***3.*** *To tackle poor attendance at school, we intend to look again at the impact of legislation that under certain circumstances protects mobile Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families from prosecution for their children’s non-attendance at school. This will be done in parallel with a review of statutory guidance.* | The Department for Education consulted on the repeal of section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. The formal consultation period ended in February 2013. | Consideration of the best approach to addressing the poor attendance of occupationally mobile pupils is ongoing. | There was a consultation on Section 444(6) of the 1996 Education Act, although the Section 444(6) defense has not often been used nor has it greatly affected attendance (although it has offered an excuse to some schools to turn a blind eye to pupil absences).  Cutbacks in Traveller Education services and support have had a negative impact.  The numbers of children whose parents have chosen Elective Home Education (largely unregulated) could be a cause for concern, as it can be seen as a way of legitimising non-attendance at school. However, there are many reasons why a family do not send their children to school (especially Secondary School) and some families will arrange their own tutors .This area needs further study. |
| ***4.*** *In response to the unacceptably high levels of exclusion among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, we will take steps to assess the impact of school-based commissioning, alternative provision and early intervention on the most vulnerable pupil groups.* | The Department for Education ran a three year school exclusion trial, which ended in July 2014. | A full report on the exclusion trial was published in July 2014:  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion-trial-evaluation> | When the schools were chosen for the Exclusions trial there was no attempt to include schools with Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupils, hence the data obtained did not make a significant contribution to understanding and improving the situation for these groups. |
| ***5.*** *The results of an Ofsted survey on prejudiced-based bullying, which will pick up bullying of minority pupils, will be published next year.* | Ofsted published its report, which includes a reference to Traveller pupils. | Ofsted published its report, *No place for bullying*, in June 2012.  <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/no-place-for-bullying> | The survey did not directly address bullying of minority ethnic groups and there was no mention at all of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers,. Our own research (see, for example, “Experts by Experience”) has revealed the impact that bullying can have on both attendance and achievement.  There is a clear need for School Teachers and other staff to be made aware of racist terminology which can negatively impact on GTR children. |
| ***6.*** *We will collect and publish brief case studies from the highest performing schools for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, to find out from them what lies behind their success.* | The Department for Education has published case studies and disseminated case studies from the Virtual Headteachers work (see above) | The case studies were published in September 2014  [www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-pupils-supporting-access-to-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-pupils-supporting-access-to-education). | These were published and provided some useful advice but most schools with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils on roll or in their area have never read them.  The excellent training materials that were developed were, regrettably, removed from the DfE website, making it harder for others to access and make use of them. |
| **Dept of Health** |  |  |  |
| **7.** *We will work with the National Inclusion Health Board, the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to include the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the commissioning of health services.* | Gypsy and Traveller organisations presented to the National Inclusion Health Board on two occasions.  The Royal Colleague of General Practitioners was commissioned to produce a guide for clinical commission groups and GPs on commissioning for social excluded groups. | The guide was published in September 2013.  <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/Policy/RCGP-policy-areas/Health-inequalities.aspx> | There can be a gap between policy and practice. For example, recent research carried out in Birmingham by the Red Cross has highlighted the difficulties faced by GRT community members in accessing GP services despite guidance provided to GP Surgeries on exactly this issue.  It has been reported that some ambulance services will not attend certain postcodes |
| **8.** *We will explore how health and wellbeing boards can be supported to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers with the worst health outcomes are better reflected in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies.* | Department of Health undertook a review of all Joint Strategic Needs Assessments current at April 2013 to provide a benchmark. This has been shared with Gypsy and Traveller organisations to facilitate transparency and support local challenge.  Department of Health has funded Friends, Families and Travellers and Leeds GATE to deliver the “National Gypsy and Traveller Health Inclusion Project”, a three year programme of work, ending in 2015, to encourage and support greater recognition of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in local assessment, planning and commissioning of health services. An early outcome is a cost benefit analysis ‘Gypsy and Traveller Health-Who Pays?’ which makes the case for early, appropriate, intervention to improve health outcomes for these communities.  <http://www.leedsgate.co.uk/2013/06/25/why-should-commissioners-invest-in-gypsy-and-traveller-health-a-new-report-from-leeds-gate/> | Published August 2013.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-inclusive-health-services-practical-steps--2> | Whilst the joint FFT/Leeds GATE work was excellent we have yet to see what real impact this has had in terms of JSNAs and health and wellbeing strategies. A number of NHS bodies to whom we have spoken seem completely unaware of the FFT/Leeds GATE work.  Some voluntary groups are undertaking some very good work with the boards (Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group for example) but good practice doesn’t seem to be shared. |
| **9.** *We will work with the UCL Institute of Health Equity and the Inclusion Health working groups to identify gaps in data and research, and look to identify the specific interventions that produce positive health outcomes.* | Department of Health commissioned the Institute at UCL to deliver a three-year programme to support the Inclusion Health programme. The Institute supported the Data and Research working group, which included a Gypsy and Traveller representative.  Department of Health has published three reports on this work. The Hidden Needs report, which looks at data and research for vulnerable groups.  The Inclusive Practice report, which looks at improving access to primary care and the associated summary of good practice. | Hidden Needs report published in March 2014.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/effective-health-care-for-vulnerable-groups-prevented-by-data-gaps>  Inclusive Practice report published 30 April 2014.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-primary-care-among-vulnerable-groups-review-of-evidence>  Good practice guide published 30 April 2014  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-practice-in-improving-care-for-vulnerable-groups> | While these reports are admirable we have yet to see them translated into concrete action. |
| **10.** *We will work with the inclusion health working groups to identify what more needs to be done to improve maternal health, reduce infant mortality and increase immunisation rates.* | Department of Health asked Gypsy and Traveller organisations to disseminate and “mystery shop” the new Information Service for Parents - an email and text message service which provides parents-to-be and new parents with quality assured information relevant to pregnancy and the first six months of a child’s life.  Department of Health funded the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain to deliver a three year “Gypsy Traveller Roma Maternity Advocacy and Engagement” project. This project worked with women from the Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities to address maternity care issues within their communities and to increase their knowledge base on infant care, access to services and awareness of rights and entitlements. The organisation estimate the project benefited at least 100,000 community members and developed an award winning DVD which is widely used for training across the country by health professionals. | <http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/Pages/healthy-pregnancy-baby-advice.aspx> | As above. We need to see data on this in order to gauge whether or not improvements have been made. |
| **11.** *We will work with the Inclusion Health Board to embed the Inclusion Health programme in training for all health professionals with the aim of developing a strong, stable and capable workforce that can drive change and make a difference to the lives and health outcomes of the most vulnerable.* | Department of Health to publish two documents from the National Inclusion Health Board:   * a knowledge and skills framework mapping document for practitioners working with vulnerable individuals or groups; and * a review of the extent to which pre and post graduate training of health professionals include how to meet the needs of vulnerable groups. It includes a focus on Gypsies and Travellers. |  | Our work with health professionals in the West Midlands would indicate that this is not happening with regard to GTR communities. |
| **DCLG** |  |  |  |
| ***12.*** *We will help Gypsy and Traveller representative groups showcase small private sites that are well presented and maintained.* | DCLG contacted local authorities - around 30 responded suggesting possible sites for inclusion. We suggested ideas for this project to the Liaison Group, including a template case study document to help them to take the lead on this. | Discussions about this at DCLG Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group, in November 2012. | This has not yet happened to any noticeable extent. As a result there is still a shortfall in the number of sites required, (although this will be masked by GTAAs using the revised Gypsy/Traveller definition) |
| ***13.*** *The Government will continue to promote improved health outcomes for travellers through the planning system.* | Wording on health is in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (published in April 2012). | Planning policy published in April 2012.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites> | The revised definition of Gypsy/Traveller in the up-dated PPTS is likely to have the opposite of the desired effect, with increased uncertainty with regard to planning permission leading to poorer health outcomes via greater stress and greater incidence of unauthorised encampments (with associated poorer access to health services) |
| **Home Office** |  |  |  |
| **14.** *We have published a new cross-Government hate crime action plan, setting out our vision and approach for tackling hate crime over the remainder of this Parliament.* | Published a progress report of our achievements since the plan was published in March 2012. The report also identified key emerging issues and what the Government will do to tackle these.  Encouraging better reporting from communities, changes in police attitudes, better promotion of True Vision and data collection were identified as the key priorities to help build confidence within communities. | Hate Crime Action Plan progress report published May 2014.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-challenge-it-report-it-stop-it> | With regard to “Action Against Hate” plan for tackling hate crime, published in July 2016, the NFGLG/ DCLG Liaison Group only received this document for feedback after it was finalised, rather than as a consultation on scoping, evidence and options. Consequently the action plan does not how the Gypsy and Traveller community is affected by hate crime. For further details we would refer you to the submissions made in response to the plan by (for example) LGTU. |
| **15.** *We will promote better recording of all hate crimes. Helping us to target our work more effectively and help the police to better focus resources.* | First set of Official Statistics on hate crimes recorded by police forces in England and Wales in 2011/12 published by the Home Office in September 2012 and has been published annually since this time.  Publication also included information on the type of offences provided to the data hub by some forces.  ‘An Overview of Hate Crime’ was published in October 2014 and includes information on the number of hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2013 to 2014. The bulletin covers the extent and trends in hate crime for all forces, with additional analysis based upon more detailed data supplied by 18 police forces on the types of offences and outcomes associated with hate crime. | <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-and-preventing-crime--2/supporting-pages/hate-crime> | The lack of consistency in including GRT as categories in monitoring systems (combined with an unwillingness, owing to previous negative experiences, to report such crimes to the Police) means that there is likely to be under-recognition of hate crimes affecting GRT communities |
| **16.** *The Association of Chief Police Officers will develop an information pack and self-reporting form specifically tailored for Gypsy and Traveller communities as part of its True Vision Website resource.* | True Vision managers have worked with community liaison groups to develop products to encouraging reporting of hate crime from within the Gypsy and Traveller Communities. These include posters which have been created and circulated in communities.  The Police have recently sponsored two young amateur boxers from a Traveller community who will compete nationally in sportswear advertising True Vision and encouraging the reporting of hate crime. As will the media coverage of the sponsorship. | Posters available on the True Vision website:  <http://www.report-it.org.uk/downloads> | Feedback from community members indicates that the True Vision website is very “word heavy” and difficult to negotiaite. However It was reported back that there was a quick response when it was used by community members |
| **17.** *The Association of Chief Police Officers will issue a refreshed Hate Crime Manual which will include specific guidance for police officers on working effectively with Gypsy and Traveller communities.* | College of Policing Hate Crime Strategy and Operational Guidance were published in May 2014.  It has been downloaded more than 4,500 times.  Section 3.2.1. of the guidance specifically covers hate crime targeting Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities | Hate Crime Strategy and Operational Guidance published May 2014.  <http://www.report-it.org.uk/strategy_and_guidance> | Whilst the production of the revised Hate Crime Manual is a welcome step, as so often there can be real problems in translating Guidance into Action. There are examples of positive cross Police/Community working (for example in Cleveland) but these would appear to be the exception rather than the norm.  Whilst hard data is absent (owing to the lack of inclusion of GRT communities in CJS ethnicity categories), it is certainly the view of the communities that hate crime against GRT communities is increasing e.g. there has been a notably reported “spike” in anti-Roma hate crime post “Brexit” |
| **18.** *We will collect and publish local examples of what works in preventing and tackling hate crime for Community Safety Partnerships.* | A call for expressions of interest was put out to community safety partnerships during the summer 2012 in order to identify local examples. We received expressions from local projects undertaking a variety of activities to tackle hate crime. We found that a large number of those local projects were yet to evaluate their projects. We continue to work with local areas to encourage them to evaluate their projects. We will publish examples that meet the effective practice framework standard on an ongoing basis. | Examples of good practice were published in the action plan progress report in May 2014. | We would like to see evidence of CSPs including specific reference to GRT communities, to ensure that hate crime against these communities is acknowledged. |
| **MoJ / NOMS** |  |  |  |
| ***19.*** *The National Offender Management Service will monitor the population of Gypsies and Travellers in prison and under probation supervision, to ensure access to activities is appropriate and meets the needs of Gypsies and Travellers through their rehabilitation.* | The prison case management system - NOMIS - has switched to 2011 census codes, and Gypsy Traveller Roma is now available as a category to new prisoners being received into prison.  Data on existing prisoners can also be updated and prisons are working on this.  During 2013/14, the Service piloted various methods of increasing the declaration rates of protected characteristic from prisoners (this included the status of Gypsies and Travellers). It then published support for prisons in doing this and sent a senior leader message on the importance of this to all prisons. This saw the numbers of Gypsies and Traveller prisoners declaring their ethnicity almost double. | Awaiting publication in the NOMS Equality Report 13/14 | The report “ People in prison: Gypsies, Romany and Travellers A findings paper” published by HM Inspectorate of Prisons in February 2014 noted thatthere is evidence of a possible reluctance by many Gypsy, Romany or Traveller prisoners to identify themselves as such. Further, there were no accurate figures on the number of Gypsy or Irish Travellers available from P-NOMIS as prisoners who arrived in custody prior to the Gypsy and Irish traveller code being available on the system had not yet been given the opportunity to revise their record to accurately reflect their ethnicity.  The report did find that the proportion of prisoners who consider themselves Gypsy, Romany or Traveller is strikingly high in some prisons and that it would appear that there is greater use of pre-trial custody at the request of criminal justice agencies who fear this group are more likely to abscond.  NFGLG has letters from inmates who want to have resources for GRT clubs. Sadly we do not have the funding to disseminate anything to them. |
| ***20.*** *The National Offender Management Service will regularly review the good practice guidance provided to staff on equality and diversity to ensure information and cultural awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture is incorporated and adequately addresses the needs of Gypsy and Traveller offenders.* | Good practice guidance, developed in partnership with NACRO, is available to staff on the NOMS intranet.  The guidance comprises several annexes including ‘Myths and Facts’ and ‘A Brief History of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK’.  Issues of 'Travellers in Prison News', a newsletter published by the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain continue to be made available on the intranet.  NOMS has commissioned the airing of themed Prison Radio programmes which has been broadcasted in prisons | Internal | No comments |
| ***21.*** *The National Offender Management Service will revise the equalities training provided to new entrant prison officers with an expectation that sessions on race equality will include Gypsy and Traveller issues and awareness.* | A revised version of the equality and diversity training is being drafted.  The current version includes a case study about a traveller prisoner. | Internal | No comment |
| ***22.*** *The National Offender Management Service will introduce a cluster arrangement of prisons overseen by a Lead Governor who will have greater discretion to commission the offender learning and skills provision required locally to best meet the needs of the offenders they are managing.* | Lead Governors and cluster Heads of Learning and Skills are in place across England.  The new Offenders Learning and Skills Service is now in place across all units of procurement. | n/a | No comment |
| **DWP** |  |  |  |
| **23.** *We will provide personalised support to Gypsies and Travellers via the Work Programme and where needed, Gypsies and Travellers will have access to appropriate skills support.* | Flexible, personalised support for jobseekers is available through the Work Programme and through the work focussed services offered by Jobcentre Plus. | n/a | No comment |
| **24.** *We will include Gypsies and Travellers as a monitoring category in our IT, processing and management information systems with changes being made for the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.* | Monitoring categories in IT systems being developed for the roll-out of Universal Credit are based on the ethnicity categories used in the 2011 Census – and so include Gypsy or Irish Traveller as a distinct ethnic group.  Ethnicity information will be a compulsory field during data collection (although there will be a “prefer not to say” option). | n/a | As far as we are aware this has still not happened |
| **25.** *We will improve internal guidance and staff awareness of Gypsies and Travellers as an ethnic group.* | Internal staff guidance now includes easy-to-find information about Gypsy and Traveller issues, including background to the population, history and cultural traditions, as well as links to best practice, and to Gypsy Roma and Traveller organisations. | Internal | No comment |
| **26.** *Gypsies and Travellers are now represented on the Department for Work and Pensions’ Ethnic Minority Advisory Group.* | The Ethnic Minority Advisory Group has recently been reviewed and re-launched as the Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group, with a new chairman (Sandra Kerr), revised membership and refreshed terms of reference, focusing more closely on DWP’s work agenda. The new membership includes the Irish Traveller Movement, whose remit on the group is to represent the wider Gypsy and Traveller perspective. | <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/ethnic-minority-employment-stakeholder-group> | This Group no longer exists. We have not been informed how DWP intends now to involve the GRT community |
| **DWP and DCLG** |  |  |  |
| ***27.*** *We will encourage measures to improve financial inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers.*  *The Department for Work and Pensions will continue to work across Government to ensure communities are aware of the services that credit unions offer.* | DCLG co-ordinated a review of access to finance by ethnic minority businesses. The report will have some relevance to Gypsies and Travellers.  In January 2012, the Government brought a Legislative Reform Order into effect, to improve the environment in which credit unions operate. | Access to Finance report published in July 2013.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethnic-minority-businesses-and-access-to-finance> | We have seen no evidence of the effectiveness of this.  It is extremely hard for some Gypsy people to open a bank account, many of the elder ones have post office accounts, these are problematic if they do move on to site as you cannot set them up with Direct Debits (for rent etc.) This financial exclusion often means that families lose out.  Many banks do an electoral roll check which is also a barrier.  Proof of three years address is also problematic |
| **DCLG** |  |  |  |
| ***28.*** *We will promote examples of good engagement between service providers and Gypsies and Travellers and other good practice through the Knowledge Hub website.* | DCLG have put some examples on the Knowledge Hub website - mainly links to other sites focusing on site provision - for example, a local authority produced a welcome pack for Gypsies and Travellers moving on to local authority sites. We have also posted links to emerging work from other Departments.  The hub is open to others to also post links. | <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/home> | Minimal use has been made of this site in the last 3 years (only one new post since September 2014) i.e. it is not an effective mechanism for promoting good practice.  Out on the ground and at the side of the road is mainly the best way to get messages across (although increased used is being made of social media, especially Facebook) |

1. London Gypsy and Traveller Unit (2016), “Planning for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in London” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. European Commission: Directorate-General for Justice Report on the implementation of the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. European Union 2014 - page 55, 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The Traveller Movement (February 2016), “Inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in ethnic monitoring systems of Police forces in the UK” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)